

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1-6 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A fixing method[[.]] comprising:

heat-pressure-fixing an unfixed toner image formed on a recording medium by using fixing means, wherein:

wherein the unfixed toner image is fixed when the recording medium passes through at least [[2]] two fixing units arranged in series in a conveying direction of the recording medium[[;]],

wherein a toner for forming the unfixed toner image comprises a toner containing a release agent[[;]], and

wherein the following formulas (1) and (2) are satisfied when a maximum temperature on the recording medium when the recording medium passes through a first fixing unit is denoted by T1, a maximum temperature on the recording medium when the recording medium passes through a second fixing unit is denoted by T2, a minimum temperature on the recording medium during a time period commencing on ejection of the recording medium from the first fixing unit and ending on entry of the recording medium into the second fixing unit is denoted by t, a flow tester softening temperature of the toner is denoted by Ts, and a flow starting temperature of the toner is denoted by Tfb[[.]]:

$$T1 > Tfb \quad \text{formula (1)}$$

$$T2 > t > Ts \quad \text{formula (2),}$$

2. (Currently Amended) The fixing method according to claim 1, wherein, when a flow tester ½ method melting temperature of the toner is denoted by T1/2, T1/2 and T2 satisfy the following formula (3)[[.]]:

$$T2 > T1/2 \quad \text{formula (3)}_x$$

3. (Currently Amended) The fixing method according to claim 1, wherein a maximum value of a maximum endothermic peak is found in a temperature range of 60°C to 140°C in an endothermic curve in differential scanning calorimetry on the toner.

4. (Currently Amended) A fixing device[[.]] comprising;

fixing means for heat-pressure-fixing an unfixed toner image formed on a recording medium;~~wherein, the fixing means comprising fixing units which are heat-pressure-fixing type devices.~~

wherein the unfixed toner image is fixed when the recording medium passes through at least [[2]] two of the fixing units arranged in series in a conveying direction of the recording medium[[.]];

wherein a toner for forming the unfixed toner image comprises a toner containing a release agent[[.]]<sub>x</sub> and

wherein the following formulas (1) and (2) are satisfied when a maximum temperature on the recording medium when the recording medium passes through a first fixing unit is denoted by T1, a maximum temperature on the recording medium when the recording medium passes through a second fixing unit is denoted by T2, a minimum temperature on the recording medium

during a time period commencing on ejection of the recording medium from the first fixing unit and ending on entry of the recording medium into the second fixing unit is denoted by  $t$ , a flow tester softening temperature of the toner is denoted by  $T_s$ , and a flow starting temperature of the toner is denoted by  $T_{fb}$ [[.]];

$$T1 > T_{fb} \quad \text{formula (1)}$$

$$T2 > t > T_s \quad \text{formula (2)}_2$$

5. (Currently Amended) The fixing device according to claim 4, wherein, when a flow tester  $\frac{1}{2}$  method melting temperature of the toner is denoted by  $T1/2$ ,  $T1/2$  and  $T2$  satisfy the following formula (3)[[.]];

$$T2 > T1/2 \quad \text{formula (3)}_2$$

6. (Currently Amended) The fixing device according to claim 4, wherein a maximum value of a maximum endothermic peak is found in a temperature range of  $60^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $140^{\circ}\text{C}$  in an endothermic curve in differential scanning calorimetry on the toner.